

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

AL-VII-A-031

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

AL-IVA136 20

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

African Methodist Episcopal Church

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Northeast corner of Decatur Street at
Frederick Street (U.S. Rte. 220)

CITY, TOWN

Cumberland

VICINITY OF

Sixth

STATE

Maryland

CODE

24

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

COUNTY

Allegany

CODE

001

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

☒ RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Congregation of the A.M.E. Church Attention: Reverend Jackson

STREET & NUMBER

Decatur Street at Frederick Street

CITY, TOWN

Cumberland

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland

21502

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Allegany County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Prospect Square

CITY, TOWN

Cumberland

STATE

Maryland

21502

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

DESCRIPTION

AL-IV-A-136

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☒ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The African Methodist Episcopal Church is located on the northeast corner of Decatur and Frederick Streets, Cumberland, Maryland. It was built in 1892 on the site of an earlier church.

The church is a two-story brick building on a concrete foundation with a gable roof. The south gable end contains the main entrance and faces Decatur Street; the west elevation lies along Frederick Street. The sanctuary is on the second floor with a meeting room below.

The south gable end has a large, pointed-arch stained glass window at the second story level and two recessed, double doors separated by three small round-arched windows on the first floor. A band of decorative brick extends across the wall at the level of the top of the doors. A second band crosses the facade on either side of the large window. The large window consists of two smaller, pointed-arch windows with a round window above contained in the molding of the larger window. Each leaf of the double doors in the two entrances has two panels, a larger on top. Above each door is a semicircular overlight. A set of concrete stairs leads up to each door. The peak of the gable is decorated by a board with a trefoil cutout and simple stickwork below.

The Frederick Street (west) elevation is five bays long with six brick buttresses defining the bays. The first floor windows have six-over-six, double-hung sash, except the southernmost which has a one-over-one sash with stained glass. The northernmost bay contains a door. On the second floor are five lancet-shaped, stained glass windows.

The east elevation is very similar to the west but stands against the dwelling just east of it. The north gable end has windows only on the first floor.

The floor plan of the first floor consists of an entrance/stair hall in the south end and a large meeting room with a stage in the northeast corner in the rest of the building. The stairs rise from either side to the center, leading into the church. There is a balcony on the south end facing the altar in the north end. The pews were installed in three sections and are curved facing the altar. The interior, very plain in decoration, has been renovated several times, though the pews are earlier than the modifications.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

AL-IV-A-136

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) black history
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1892

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The African Methodist Episcopal Church building in Cumberland is a material part of the history of the free blacks in that city. This substantial building reflects the level of prosperity the black community had reached by 1892, as well as the prominent place of the Church in the life of the community.

The congregation that built this church is itself important in Maryland's black history as an early organized group of free blacks. In 1847 blacks who had for many years worshipped from the balcony at the Centre Street Methodist Episcopal Church decided to leave the white congregation and build their own church. They elected a board of trustees, and a plain brick building was completed by the end of 1848. A Father Golden, of Baltimore, came to Cumberland to help in this effort.

In 1847 Lot #15 in Magruder's Addition to Cumberland was sold to the trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, in particular, Burgis Magruder. In 1863, after Magruder's death, his administrator confirmed the sale to the trustees, described as "free men of color". The deed mentions a "church and lot".

This first church was rebuilt and enlarged in 1871 and enlarged again in 1875 to accommodate the increasing membership. The present church was built in 1892 in the Methodist tradition with the sanctuary on the second floor and Sunday school rooms below.

A certificate of incorporation was recorded for the congregation on July 7, 1886. The trustees at that time were Pastor Joseph H. Robinson, Frederick Burger, Allison Shackelford, Philip L. Brown, William H. Campbell, and Stewart McNeal.

Two years later a deed was recorded from the House Building Association of Cumberland to the African Methodist Episcopal Church (65/644). The lot description was as follows:

All that lot . . . the intersection of the North side of Decatur Street with the East side of Frederick Street.

In 1901 this lot was sold to William M. Mertens (88/411).

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Lowdermilk, Will H. History of Cumberland. Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1971 reprint.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM REFERENCES

A  B 
C  D 

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

NAME / TITLE

Faye Purdham and Mel Collins

ORGANIZATION

DATE _____

Maryland Historical Trust, Allegany County Committee

November 1977

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

303 East Clement Street

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Cumberland

Maryland 21502

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL _____ STATE X LOCAL _____

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE _____

FOR NPS USE ONLY

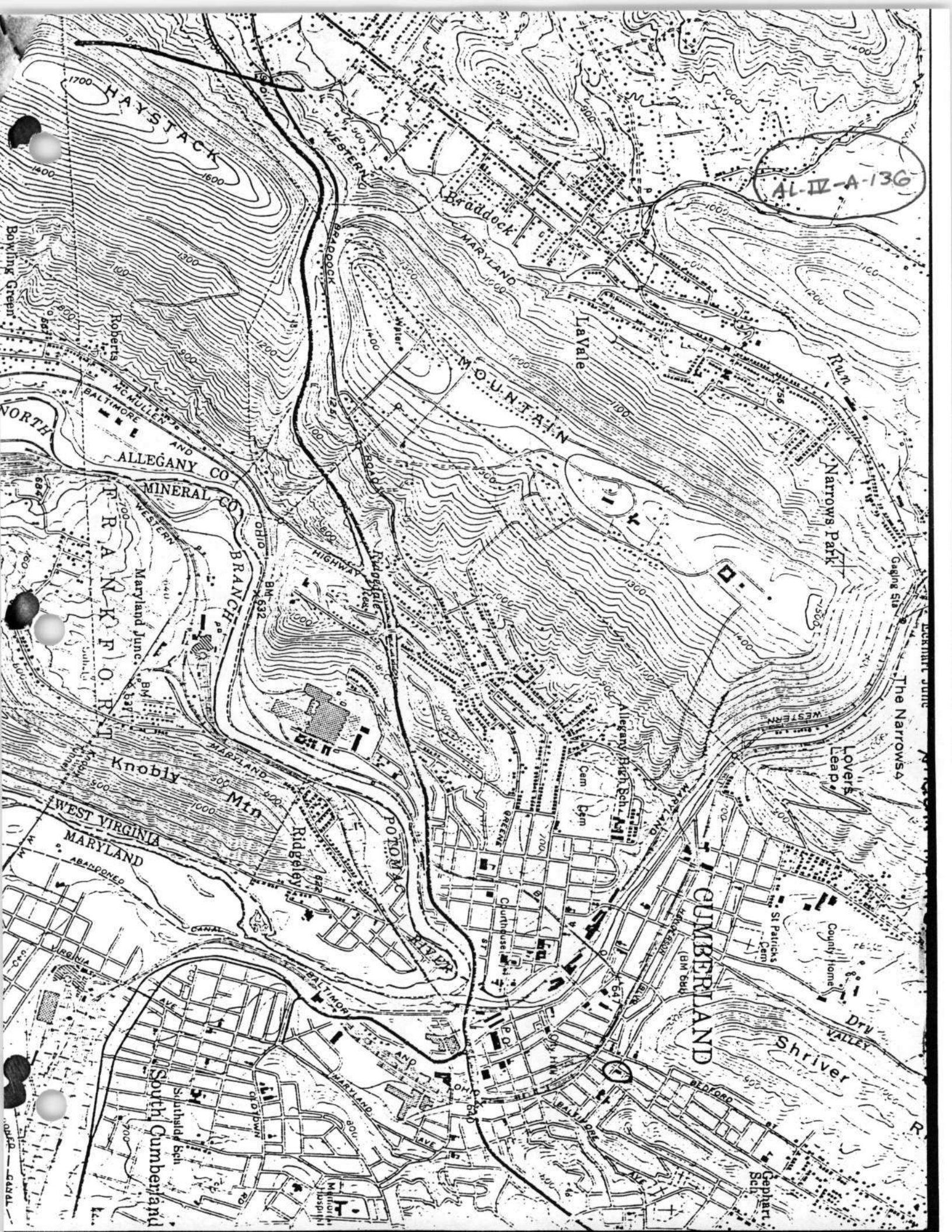
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE _____

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE _____

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



AL-IV-A-136

HAYSTACK
1700
1600

Braddock
MARYLAND

MOUNTAIN
1400

ALLEGANY CO
MINERAL CO

FRANKFORD
BRANCH

Knobly
Mtn

WEST VIRGINIA
MARYLAND

CUMBERLAND

Shriver

South Cumberland

Oldtown

Southside Bn

Southside Bn